ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

December 12, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Renee Wegrzyn
Director, Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Secretary Becerra and Director Wegrzyn:

Congratulations to the Biden Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Institutes of Health on the establishment of the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H). We believe this agency has the capacity to generate transformational discoveries in healthcare that will accelerate improved health outcomes across all segments of our nation's diverse population. We understand that many regions of the country have reached out to you about hosting ARPA-H. While those communities have much to offer, we believe that the ideal ecosystem to accomplish ARPA-H's transformative mission is Montgomery County, Maryland.

Our county's mix of life sciences and health care research assets from both the private sector and federal agencies, plus its status as one of the most diverse and highly educated counties in the country, provides the greatest opportunity for ARPA-H to reach its full potential. In addition, the many potential headquarters locations in our county offer climate-friendly transit accessibility via robust bus and light rail services including direct connections to both Reagan National and Dulles Airports by Metro rail.

Many experts around the country agree that certain critical assets are needed for ARPA-H to succeed in its mission. These include a large, highly trained, and highly diverse life sciences workforce; outstanding higher education assets in life sciences and computational research; a dynamic life sciences industry cluster including incubators, venture funding, and other support for innovative start-ups; proximity to federal research agencies already doing leading-edge work in related research; a strategic location with adequate office space and easy access to the rest of

the country; and a strong quality of life with amenities to attract and retain top talent. Our county is a leader in every category of these necessary assets.

Large, Highly Trained Life Sciences Workforce – Per a 2022 CBRE national study, the Metropolitan Washington, DC region is home to the second largest life sciences workforce in the U.S. Most of these highly educated employees work in Montgomery County and live along the I-270 corridor.

Highly Diverse Workforce – With a population that speaks more than 150 languages and is 20% Black, 20% Hispanic, and 16% Asian, our county is far more diverse than most of the country. Our diverse population is an excellent advantage to ARPA-H in terms of the ability to recruit a workforce with a breadth of ideas and backgrounds for scientific innovation and an understanding of the crucial nature of addressing health disparities through healthcare discovery, testing, and solutions.

Academic Research – Advanced Computing and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have emerged as critical factors in speeding recent advances in drug discovery and vaccination development. Our county recently announced it would be the home of a new Institute for Health Computing formed by a partnership of the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP), the University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB), the University of Maryland Medical System, and Montgomery County. The Institute, officially named UM 3 – Institute for Health Computing, will focus on leveraging the universities' national leadership in AI, machine learning, and virtual reality; its national top ten research capacity; and its large, uniquely diverse patient database for accelerated drug discovery and population health solutions. In addition to this new institute, the Universities at Shady Grove campus in Montgomery County offers nearly 80 undergraduate and graduate degree programs from nine Maryland public universities. Our community college, Montgomery College, supports workforce development with first-of-its-kind programs in mock cGMP training, clinical trials project management, and cell and gene therapy.

Our county also is located within an hour's drive of many other premier academic institutions doing biomedical and computational research, including Johns Hopkins University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Howard University, Morgan State University, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), the northern Virginia campuses of that state's public universities and the home campuses of UMCP and UMB. Several of these institutions already provide a ready source of program officers to DARPA and other federal agencies in the region and have experience with faculty and staff taking sabbaticals to serve as program officers at these organizations.

Dynamic Life Sciences Cluster with Support for Innovative Startups – AstraZeneca, BioNTech, Emergent BioSolutions, GSK, Horizon, MilliporeSigma, Novavax, Precigen, and United Therapeutics are among many global companies that are part of our county's life sciences cluster, which is the core of the fourth largest biopharma cluster[1] in the country. Montgomery

[1] https://www.genengnews.com/a-lists/top-10-u-s-biopharma-clusters-8/

County is also home to many younger innovative biotechs that are leaders in cell and gene therapy and other health technologies, such as Arcellx, Adaptive Phage Therapeutics, Immunomic Therapeutics, and Macrogenics. Our county's healthcare innovators also include leaders in MedTech (e.g., BrainScope and Senseonics), digital health (e.g., Adelade and GetWellNetwork), and diagnostics (e.g., Maxim Biomedical and Qiagen).

Montgomery County's commitment to biotech innovation has been long-standing. It includes county-run and private-sector incubator facilities, county funded commercialization support, and biotech investor incentive tax credit and SBIR match programs which are the only county programs of their kind in the country. Our county also prioritizes new biotech development in its planning and permitting processes and currently has more than 2 million square feet of lab space in its pipeline.

Proximity to Federal Research Agencies – Montgomery County has a key asset for ARPA-H success that cannot be equaled anywhere else in the country: the federal researchers doing biomedical research and regulatory work at NIH, NIST, FDA, Henry Jackson Foundation, USU, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in our county, and at additional federal facilities nearby. These agencies employ many research, regulatory, and grant review and program management experts who would provide a uniquely large and continuously refreshed population to fill the ARPA-H recruitment pool. Few, if any, other locations in the country fit the specific needs of a highly technical life sciences agency that will have a workforce that, by design, largely turns over every few years.

Strategic Location – With three airports nearby, two of which are directly connected to our county by Metro, plus easy access to the entire northeast via Amtrak, our Montgomery County location makes it easy for ARPA-H staff and researchers with promising ideas to meet in person either at ARPA-H or at researcher locations across the country. Our county has lab, office, and co-working space ready for your ARPA-H staff to move in now and additional inventory and new construction to support your planned growth.

Quality of Life – As ARPA-H recruits program managers and other staff to its new headquarters, it will find no other community better positioned to welcome the agency's new employees than Montgomery County. Our county has a robust transportation network; top nationally ranked K-12 schools; award winning public parks and other recreation services; a variety of housing opportunities; and a very diverse population whose cultures and backgrounds are valued by industry, community leaders, and other residents. Science, entrepreneurship, STEM education, and innovation are part of the daily discussions of many county leaders and residents. Our county's location near the nation's capital will enhance the educational and cultural opportunities for program managers during their rotations. Its robust life sciences cluster provides further opportunities for them should they want to remain in the area after their terms at ARPA-H end.

In summary, the DARPA model, with its location near the U.S. Department of Defense but outside the walls of the Pentagon, has led to success exceeding all expectations. Similarly, ARPA-H can best reach its full potential if it has the necessary private-sector healthcare assets and proximity to

HHS, NIH, and other federal agencies. Montgomery County, Maryland, is the only location that provides the entire ecosystem needed for maximum potential success for ARPA-H. We look forward to supporting ARPA-H in its revolutionary vision and welcome the opportunity to provide you and your real estate team a tour of our potential locations.

For more information, please contact either one of us directly, or Tom Lewis, Office of the County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland at Thomas.Lewis@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Sincerely,

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Evan Glass
County Council President

cc: The Honorable Ben Cardin, U.S Senator for Maryland
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, U.S Senator for Maryland
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, U.S Representative for Maryland
The Honorable C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, U.S Representative for Maryland
The Honorable John Sarbanes, U.S Representative for Maryland
The Honorable Kweisi Mfume, U.S Representative for Maryland
The Honorable Anthony Brown, U.S Representative for Maryland
The Honorable Jamie Raskin, U.S Representative for Maryland
The Honorable David Trone, U.S Representative for Maryland

The following biotech innovators and other organizations are among many expressing their strong support for locating ARPA-H being in Montgomery County, Maryland:

3i Diagnostics, Inc.
Adaptive Phage Therapeutics
Akan Biosciences, Inc.
Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc.
American Gene Technologies
BioHealth Innovation
Biohippo, Inc.
Boston Properties
BrainScope
CareDx
Carradora Health, Inc.
CellOptic, Inc.
Cerium Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
City of Gaithersburg
City of Rockville
Clongen Laboratories, LLC
Codex BioSolutions, Inc.
Creatv MicroTech, Inc.
Cyquent, Inc.
Deka Biosciences, Inc
EPR-Technologies, Inc.
ExeGi Pharma
Fina Biosolutions
Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce
GlenLine Investments
Global Life Sciences Village
Greater Rockville Chamber of Commerce
Integrated BioTherapeutics
Intelios
Lumo Imaging LLC
Lung Biotechnology
M3 Information
Maxim Biomedical
Minkoff Development
miRecule, Inc.
Montgomery College
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
Montgomery County Economic Development Corp.
Montgomery County Workforce Development Board
Olney Chamber of Commerce
PediaMetrix, Inc
PerSoN Clinic, Inc
Pike District Partnership, Inc.
Primetime Life Sciences LLC
Qiagen
Quality Biological
REGENXBIO
Reveragen
Rockville Economic Development, Inc.
Salamandra, LLC
SeeTrue Technology
Seraxis, Inc.
Silbiotech
Stonebridge
Sunwater Capital
Technology Digest, Inc.
The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce
United States Pharmacopeia
Universities at Shady Grove
Weinberg Medical Physics, Inc.
Westat